



General Assembly

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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Committee

Acting Chairman: Mr. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba)

[1. At its 1498th meeting, on 11 August 1998, the Special Committee considered pending matters related to its work and took decisions on the following agenda items.]

Question of holding a series of meetings away from Headquarters

2. The General Assembly, by paragraph 6 of its resolution 1654 (XVI) of 27 November 1961, authorized the Special Committee to meet elsewhere than at United Nations Headquarters whenever and wherever such meetings might be required for the effective discharge of its functions. By paragraph 3 (9) of the programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in its resolution 2621 (XXV) of 12 October 1970, the Assembly directed the Committee to continue to hold meetings away from Headquarters as appropriate.

3. The Special Committee decided that in that connection it would consider accepting such invitations as might be received in 1999 and that, when the particulars of such meetings became known, it would request the Secretary-General to seek the necessary budgetary provisions in accordance with established procedure.

Representation at seminars, meetings and conferences of intergovernmental and other organizations

4. The Special Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the Committee continue to be represented at seminars, meetings and conferences organized by United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of decolonization. In keeping with its decision of 6 February 1998, the Committee would authorize its Chairman to hold consultations, as appropriate, concerning its participation in those meetings, as well as the level of representation, when accepting invitations. In accordance with established practice, the Chairman would hold consultations with the Bureau members who, in turn, would consult with the members of the Committee from their respective regional groups. The Special Committee recommended that the Assembly make appropriate budgetary provisions to cover such activities in 1999.

Pattern of conferences

5. The Special Committee noted that during the year, the Committee had closely followed the guidelines set forth in



the resolutions of the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences, in particular resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997. By organizing its programme of work effectively and holding extensive consultations, the Committee had been able to curtail considerably the number of its formal meetings. The Special Committee decided to continue to make optimum and effective use of conference-servicing resources.

6. The Special Committee decided, taking into account the probable workload of the Special Committee for 1999, to consider holding its meetings in accordance with the following schedule:

(a) *Plenary*

February/March:	As required
June/July:	Up to 30 meetings (6-8 meetings a week)

(b) *Bureau*

February/July:	20 meetings
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7. It would be understood that that programme would not preclude the holding of any ad hoc meetings that might be warranted and that the Special Committee might, in early 1999, review the scheduled meetings on the basis of any new developments. The Special Committee decided that, subject to any directives given by the General Assembly, the Committee, while fulfilling its mandate, would strive to keep its meetings to a minimum.

Control and limitation of documentation

8. The Special Committee noted that during the year it had taken further measures to control and limit its documentation in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular resolutions 34/50 of 23 November 1979, 39/68 D of 13 December 1984, 51/211 B of 18 December 1996 and 52/214. The Special Committee decided that, consistent with the goal of limiting documentation, it would streamline its report to the Assembly.

9. By its resolution 50/206 B of 23 December 1995, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the Special Committee to replace its verbatim record with summary records. Having reviewed the need for such records, the Special Committee decided to maintain its summary records.

Question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable

10. The Special Committee decided to continue consideration of the question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable at its next session, subject to any directives that the General Assembly might give at its fifty-third session.

International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

11. Noting that the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism provided for the holding of seminars alternately in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, the Special Committee decided to organize in 1999 a seminar in the Caribbean region, to be attended by representatives of all Non-Self-Governing Territories.

12. The Special Committee decided to invite United Nations organs, agencies and institutions to apprise the Secretary-General of actions they have taken in implementing General Assembly resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991 relating to the Plan of Action and to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

Participation of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee

13. The Special Committee decided that the participation of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Special Committee at Headquarters, as recommended by the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, should continue to be facilitated through the reimbursement by the United Nations of the expenses relating to their participation under the terms of the guidelines amended by the Committee and approved by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In that regard, the Special Committee decided to consider the guidelines at its plenary meetings with a view to amending them further, where appropriate.

14. At its 1498th meeting, on 11 August 1998 the Special Committee also took note of the following text on its future work to be included in its report to the General Assembly.

Future work

15. In accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly since 1961 and subject to further directives from the Assembly at its fifty-third session, the Special Committee intends to continue during 1999 to pursue its efforts in bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations, in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 1514 (XV) on 14 December 1960.

16. Given the significance of the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Special Committee will endeavour to look at its own work critically, making an assessment of the effectiveness of its activities and the areas in which it can effect improvements.

17. In order to facilitate the consultations on what approach it intends to take on that assessment and based on the general discussions and comments of delegates during the present session, the Acting Chairman presented a paper, without prejudice to the position of any delegation, which is annexed to the present report.

18. In order to discharge its responsibilities, the Special Committee will keep under continuous review developments concerning each Territory. It will also review the compliance by Member States, particularly the administering Powers, with the relevant decisions and resolutions of the United Nations. In that connection, the Special Committee intends to improve and strengthen its dialogue and cooperation with the administering Powers.

19. The Special Committee will continue to submit conclusions and recommendations on the specific measures necessary to achieve the objectives set out in the Declaration and the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The Special Committee also intends to continue its review of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable.

20. The Special Committee will continue to fulfil the responsibilities that have been entrusted to it in the context of the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/181. The activities to be undertaken in that connection include a seminar in the Caribbean region to be organized by the Special Committee in 1999, to be attended by representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

21. The Special Committee will continue to seek the views of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in that regard will seek the implementation of General Assembly resolutions calling upon the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the Special Committee by inviting United Nations visiting missions to the Territories under their administration. Having regard to the constructive role played by such missions in the past, the Special Committee continues to attach the utmost importance to the dispatch of visiting missions as a means of collecting adequate and first-hand information on conditions in the Territories and on the wishes and aspirations of the people concerning their future status. Accordingly, the Special Committee will continue to seek the full cooperation of the administering Powers on the matter.

22. The Special Committee will continue to pay special attention to the specific problems of the small island Territories, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Aware that, in addition to general problems facing developing countries, those island Territories also suffer handicaps arising from the interplay of such factors as size, remoteness, geographical dispersion, vulnerability to natural disasters, fragility of ecosystems, constraints in transport and communications, great distances from market centres, a highly limited internal market, lack of natural resources, weak indigenous technological capacity, the acute problem of obtaining freshwater supplies, heavy dependence on imports and a small number of commodities, depletion of non-renewable resources, migration, particularly of personnel with high-level skills, shortage of administrative personnel and heavy financial burdens, the Special Committee will continue to recommend measures to facilitate a sustained and balanced growth of the fragile economies of those Territories and increased assistance in the development of all the sectors of their economies, with particular emphasis on programmes of diversification. The Special Committee believes also that the issues facing the Non-Self-Governing Territories, such as environmental problems; the impact of hurricanes, volcanoes and other natural disasters, beach and coastal erosion and drought; finding ways and means to fight drug trafficking, money laundering and other illegal and criminal activities; and the illegal exploitation of marine resources of the Territories and the need to utilize those resources for the benefit of their peoples, should remain the focus of its attention. In so doing, the Special Committee will continue to take into consideration the recommendations of the regional seminars that it has organized since 1990 (see A/AC.109/1040 and

Corr.1, A/AC.109/1043, A/AC.109/1114, A/AC.109/1159, A/AC.109/2030, A/AC.109/2058 and A/AC.109/2089).

23. It is the intention of the Special Committee to continue to follow closely the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations. In so doing, the Special Committee, as in the past, will review the action taken or envisaged by international organizations in the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. The Special Committee will hold further consultations and contacts with those organizations as appropriate. It will be guided by the results of consultations held in 1998 and those to be held in 1999 between its Chairman and the President of the Economic and Social Council in the context of the relevant decisions of the Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee itself. Further, the Special Committee will maintain close contact with the Secretaries-General and senior officials of regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, the Caribbean Community and the South Pacific Forum, particularly those in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. The objective of those contacts is to facilitate the effective implementation of the decisions of the various United Nations bodies and to foster cooperation between the specialized agencies and the regional organizations in providing assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in a given region.

24. The Special Committee will also strive to follow up on the General Assembly's request that the participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of relevant meetings and conferences of the agencies and organizations be facilitated so that the Territories can benefit from the related activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system. Such participation would constitute an effective means of promoting the progress of the peoples of those Territories, enabling them to enhance their standard of living and achieve greater self-sufficiency.

25. The Special Committee intends to take into account the agreement reached with the European Union on the resolution on economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/2125) and to continue its cooperation with interested States to ensure that the interests of the peoples of those Territories are protected. The Special Committee will continue its study of military activities and arrangements in the Territories and will also cooperate with interested States in that regard.

26. Taking into consideration its mandate on Western Sahara and its primary responsibility to ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) for all Non-Self-Governing Territories and in accordance with a decision it had taken at its 1397th meeting, on 2 August 1991, the Special Committee may dispatch a mission to Western Sahara during the holding of the referendum in the Territory.

27. Taking into account the views expressed by the representatives of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories at the regional seminars organized by the Special Committee since 1990, as well as the recommendations contained in the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Special Committee will continue to consider, in cooperation with the administering Powers, how to intensify and improve the participation of the representatives of those Territories in the work of the Special Committee within existing resources.

28. In the light of the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions concerning the pattern of conferences, and taking into consideration its experience in previous years as well as its probable workload for 1999, the Special Committee has approved a tentative programme of meetings for 1999 which it commends to the Assembly for approval.

29. The Special Committee has consistently reiterated the importance of disseminating information on decolonization as an instrument for furthering the aims of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Accordingly, the Special Committee will continue to use opportunities such as the regional seminars and the observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights to disseminate information on its activities and on the Non-Self-Governing Territories in an effort to mobilize world public opinion to support and assist the people of the Territories in bringing about the speedy and unconditional end of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

30. The Special Committee suggests that, when the General Assembly, at its fifty-third session, examines the question of the implementation of the Declaration, it may wish to take into account the various recommendations of the Special Committee that are reflected in the relevant chapters of the present report and, in particular, to endorse the proposals outlined in the present section in order to enable the Special Committee to carry out the tasks envisaged for 1999. The Special Committee is gratified that the informal consultations it held with the administering Powers (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland and the United States of America) and the European Union concluded in an agreement on the consolidated draft resolution on small Territories and the draft resolution on economic and other activities that affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, respectively. It intends to pursue those consultations, which it hopes will be transformed into formal cooperation. The Special Committee recommends that the Assembly renew its appeal to the administering Powers to take all necessary steps for the implementation of the Declaration and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples of the Territories concerned. In that connection, the Special Committee recommends that the Assembly again request the administering Powers to cooperate or continue to cooperate with the Special Committee in the discharge of its mandate and, in particular, to participate actively in the work relating to the Territories under their respective administrations. The Special Committee also recommends that the Assembly continue to invite the administering Powers to allow representatives of the Territories concerned to participate in the discussions in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee on the items relating to their respective Territories. Further, the Assembly might also wish to renew its appeal to all States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to comply with the various requests addressed to them by the Assembly and the Security Council in their relevant resolutions.

31. The Special Committee recommends that, in approving the programme of work outlined above, the General Assembly make adequate provision to cover the activities the Special Committee envisages for 1999. In that regard, the Special Committee recalls that the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 includes resources to provide for the programme of work of the Special Committee for 1998 and 1999 based on the level of activities approved for 1997, without prejudice to the decisions to be taken by the Assembly at its fifty-third session. On that basis, the Special Committee understands that should any additional provisions be required over and above those included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, proposals for supplementary requirements would be made to the General Assembly for its approval. Finally, the Special Committee expresses the hope that the Secretary-General will continue to provide it with all the facilities and personnel necessary for the discharge of its mandate, taking into account the various tasks assigned to it by the Assembly as well as those arising from decisions taken by it during the current year.

Annex

Paper submitted by the Acting Chairman of Special Committee of 24*

The Special Committee of 24 may wish to convene a meeting in the near future to carry out a critical review of the work of the Special Committee and draw up a plan for its future activities. The administering Powers and all the Member States would be invited to participate in this exercise.

In order to organize that meeting, informal consultations could be held at the end of 1998 or early in 1999.

At that meeting, the Special Committee would examine, *inter alia*, the following issues or proposals:

(a) Holding early consultations with the administering Powers for the purpose of obtaining agreement on the Territories receiving United Nations visiting missions, in compliance with General Assembly resolutions;

(b) Organizing high-level missions of consultation with the administering Powers regarding progress made in the implementation of the 1960 Declaration;

(c) Organizing specialized workshops in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the participation of the specialized agencies to review the assistance needs of the Territories;

(d) Assessing the effectiveness of the regional seminars with a view to making practical recommendations to enhance their importance and impact;

(e) In cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, organizing joint meetings regarding assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly in the context of sustainable development;

(f) Organizing and conducting specialized meetings with parliamentarians on specific decolonization issues;

(g) Considering the possibility of organizing an international conference on decolonization at the highest level at United Nations Headquarters;

(h) Publishing a special issue of *Decolonization*, a quarterly publication in English, French and Spanish which began in 1974. It contained studies and monographs in the

field of decolonization. The last issue of *Decolonization* was published in December 1993. It is proposed that in 1999, one issue of *Decolonization* would be published by the Secretariat. (As a general guideline, the issue could give a general background of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, could examine the activities and achievements of the United Nations during that period and could contain information on the decisions and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.) The current budget for the biennium includes provision for publication of *Decolonization*;

(i) Compiling a compendium of General Assembly resolutions on decolonization. This is envisaged as reference material on decolonization. The compendium could cover the Decade, 1990–2000, or could go back to the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The material could be organized by session and/or subject matter (i.e., dissemination of information, specific Territories, Article 73 *e* and so on);

(j) Establishing a home page on decolonization on the Internet, including in it reports on the activities of the Special Committee, all the working papers on the Territories, the reports of the regional seminars and the resolutions adopted by the Special Committee as well as consideration by other organs and their subsidiary bodies of issues relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(k) Including selected articles on decolonization in United Nations publications (i.e., the *UN Chronicle*). Efforts should be made to have the international press include opinion/ editorial pieces on decolonization;

(l) Organizing special activities for the press, such as a round table for journalists, on decolonization issues. Members of the Special Committee, and representatives of the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories could be invited to make presentations on specific issues;

(m) Preparing kits on decolonization for dissemination in schools. Items in the kit could include some of the material mentioned above.

* This paper is being presented without prejudice to the position of any delegation.